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SUBJECT Statement by Colby

HARRY REASONER: In the past month the Central Intelligence Agency has been hit with all kinds of problems; congressional investigations, attacks from within and without the country, publication at home and abroad of the names of its agents in a manner some people thought invited injury to them.

The underlying question has been the effect of all that. Today, in an exclusive interview with ABC's Barry Dunsmore, the Director of the CIA, William Colby, says the effect has been, if not fatal, very serious indeed.

BARRY DUNSMORE: The publishing of names of agents of the CIA is just one of the concerns here at Langley, Virginia, headquarters of the Central Intelligence Agency. In short, it hurts.

For the first time, outgoing Director William Colby claims that this sort of thing, as well as Intelligence Committee disclosures and congressional leaks, have in effect, affected the ability of the agency to do its job.

CIA DIRECTOR WILLIAM COLBY: Up to a few weeks ago I used to say that I thought we had managed to get through this set of investigations with having protected most of the people and most of the foreigners and foreign services that we've dealt with, and that we'd retained an ability to say that we can still do the necessary intelligence business and keep the necessary secrets.

But in the past few weeks and months I think there has been a very considerable erosion of confidence in America's ability to run and intelligence organization among our foreign friends. This is both individuals and some of the foreign intelligence services. I have a number of situations where

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individuals have said they cannot any longer work with us, and I have other situations in which foreign intelligence services are quite clearly holding back on the kinds of information they previously gave us.

DUNSMORE: What are the implications of that in terms of the security of this country?

DIRECTOR COLBY: They are that we will know less about the world. And some of the things that we will know less of can be very dangerous to the safety of our country.

DUNSMORE: Colby admits that his own candor may even have hurt. It's been complained in high places that Colby's like a man stopped for speeding confessing to murder. He doesn't regret his candor, though he admits he didn't anticipate the way it would be sensationalized.